

## Message Text

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TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: PRESS STORY

FOLLOWING IS FULL TEXT ALAN RIDING ARTICLE NEW YORK TIMES  
SEPTEMBER 6:

BEGIN TEXT: MEXICO'S CHANGE OF PRESIDENTS EXPECTED TO IM-  
PROVE US TIES

THE MILITANT EFFORT OF PRESIDENT LUIS ECHEVERRIA ALVAREZ TO  
REDUCE MEXICO'S IDENTITY WITH THE UNITED STATES AND TO  
ALIGN IT WITH THE THIRD WORLD HAVE DRIVEN RELATIONS BETWEEN  
WASHINGTON AND MEXICO CITY TO THEIR LOWEST EBB IN RECENT  
MEMORY.

ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO SINGLE POINT OF CONFLICT BETWEEN THE  
TWO GOVERNMENTS, GROWING IRRITATION ON BOTH SIDES HAS LED  
TO SHARP EXCHANGES ON SEVERAL LONGSTANDING ISSUES, SUCH AS  
THE SUPPOSED ILL-TREATMENT OF ILLEGAL MEXICAN MIGRANTS TO  
THE UNITED STATES AND OF AMERICANS SERVING PRISON TERMS IN  
MEXICO.

YET DIPLOMATS FROM BOTH COUNTRIES WHO HAVE WATCHED HELP-  
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LESSLY AS POLITICAL TENSIONS HAVE GROWN ARE CONFIDENT THAT

MEXICO'S PRESIDENT-ELECT, JOSE LOPEZ PORTILLO, WHO TAKES OFFICE DEC 1, WILL SEEK A NORMALIZATION OF TIES WITH WASHINGTON.

BOTH OUTGOING AND INCOMING MEXICAN PRESIDENTS WILL BE VISITING THE UNITED STATES THIS MONTH. MR. ECHEVERRIA TRAVELS TO SAN ANTONIO ON TUESDAY TO OPEN A MEXICAN TRADE FAIR, ALTHOUGH A PLANNED MEETING THERE WITH PRESIDENT FORD HAS FALLEN THROUGH. TWO WEEKS LATER, MR. LOPEZ PORTILLO WILL VISIT WASHINGTON WHERE HE WILL LUNCH WITH MR. FORD AND MEET OTHER UNITED STATES OFFICIALS.

#### A COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP

IN THEIR DIFFERENT WAYS, BOTH TRIPS -- MR. ECHEVERRIA PROMOTING MEXICAN EXPORTS TO THE UNITED STATES, AND MR. LOPEZ PORTILLO INITIATING HIS OWN POLITICAL DIALOGUE WITH WASHINGTON -- REFLECT THE COMPLEXITY OF MEXICO'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ITS WEALTHY AND POWERFUL NEIGHBOR.

AS A NATION OF MIXED INDIAN AND SPANISH HERITAGE, MEXICO IS PROUDLY NATIONALIST AND ALWAYS EAGER TO ASSERT ITS CULTURAL AND POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES.

YET, POSSESSING AN ECONOMY THAT RELIES HEAVILY ON THE UNITED STATES TO PROVIDE CREDIT, MAKE INVESTMENTS, SEND TOURISTS, BUY ITS PRODUCTS AND EVEN ABSORB ITS UNEMPLOYED IN THE SHAPE OF ILLEGAL MIGRANTS, MEXICO REMAINS UNAVOIDABLY VULNERABLE TO DEVELOPMENTS NORTH OF THE 2000 MILE LONG BORDER.

DURING THE LAST FIVE YEARS, HOWEVER, PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA HAS CHOSEN TO IGNORE THIS ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE AND HAS INSTEAD SOUGHT TO TAP THE GRUDGING RESENTMENT MANY MEXICANS FEEL TOWARD THE UNITED STATES THROUGH THIRD-WORLD POLEMICS THAT HAVE NOT INFREQUENTLY SMACKED OF ANTI-AMERICANISM.

TAKING THEIR CUE FROM THE PRESIDENT, MEXICAN OFFICIALS, CONGRESSMEN AND NEWSPAPERS HAVE ALSO SINGLED OUT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, CONGRESS, PRIVATE COMPANIES, BANKERS,

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FARMERS AND EVEN CORRESPONDENTS AS BEING SOMEHOW RESPONSIBLE FOR MEXICAN AND THIRD-WORLD PROBLEMS AS VARIED AS INFLATION AND TERRORISM.

IN PRIVATE, THE PRESIDENT HAS FREQUENTLY URGED SENIOR UNITED STATES OFFICIALS AND BUSINESSMEN TO IGNORE HIS STATEMENTS AS A POLITICAL NECESSITY DESTINED EXCLUSIVELY FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION.

YET THE IMPATIENCE OF UNITED STATES OFFICIALS HERE AND IN WASHINGTON WITH THE ECHEVERRIA ADMINISTRATION IS REFLECTED IN THEIR SILENCE AT SEEING MEXICO UNDER ASSAULT FROM JEWISH AND RIGHT-WING GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES.

THE VIEW THAT THE CRISIS IN UNITED STATES-MEXICAN RELATIONS IS SPECIFICALLY LINKED TO MR. ECHEVERRIA'S ATTITUDE TOWARD WASHINGTON IS FURTHER STRENGTHENED BY THE ABSENCE OF ANY WAVE OF ANTI-AMERICANISM AMONG THE MEXICAN POPULATION AT LARGE.

MANY MEXICANS IN BUSINESS CIRCLES AND THE TOURIST INDUSTRY BLAME THE PRESIDENT'S ATTACKS ON THE UNITED STATES FOR THE CONTRACTION OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, IGNORING THAT HIS ADMINISTRATION ALSO COINCIDED WITH THE MOST SERIOUS WORLD RECESSION IN 40 YEARS.

MR. ECHEVERRIA, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS GROWN MORE CONVINCED OF THE NEED FOR A "NEW WORLD ECONOMIC ORDER" TO RESCUE THE THIRD WORLD FROM ITS POVERTY, A BELIEF THAT HE HAS TRANSLATED INTO EVER FIERCER ATTACKS ON THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS.

FREQUENTLY REMINDING WASHINGTON OF ITS ROLE IN THE OVERTHROW OF THE LATE PRESIDENT SALVADOR ALLENDE GOSSENS OF CHILE, THE MEXICAN LEADER HAS ALSO COMPLAINED THAT SPECULATION AGAINST THE MEXICAN CURRENCY, A RECENT FOURTH BOYCOTT BY AMERICAN JEWISH GROUPS, ATTACKS ON HIS GOVERNMENT BY UNITED STATES CONGRESSMEN AND EVEN ISOLATED ACTS OF TERRORISM ARE PART OF A "DESTABILIZATION" PLAN INSPIRED BY "OUTSIDE FORCES," A EUPHEMISM FOR THE UNITED STATES.

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ATTEMPT TO LURE TOURISTS

NEVERTHELESS, THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT REMAINS HIGHLY SENSITIVE ABOUT ITS IMAGE IN THE UNITED STATES. AT THE SAME TIME AS MR. ECHEVERRIA IS DENOUNCING THE UNITED STATES FOR OPPOSING WORLD ECONOMIC REFORMS, THE GOVERNMENT SPENDS MILLIONS OF DOLLARS ON ADVERTISING IN AN ATTEMPT TO CONVINCE AMERICAN INVESTORS AND TOURISTS THAT THEY ARE WELCOME HERE.

LAST MONTH, WHEN 76 UNITED STATES CONGRESSMEN SENT A LETTER TO PRESIDENT FORD DENOUNCING MEXICO'S "SLIDE TO COMMUNISM" AND ITS "ANTI-AMERICAN DEMAGOGUERY" UNDER PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA, THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT RUSHED TO DENY THE CHARGES IN LETTERS TO THE CONGRESSMEN AND TO LEADING AMER-

ICAN NEWSPAPERS.

BECAUSE POWER IN MEXICO IS SO CENTRALIZED IN THE FIGURE OF THE PRESIDENT AND POLICY REFLECTS THE INCUMBENT'S TINIEST WHIM, FOREIGN DIPLOMATS HERE EXPECT A RADICAL IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES ONCE MR. LOPEZ PORTILLO TAKES OFFICE.

AIDES CLOSE TO MR. LOPEZ PORTILLO INSIST THAT HE WILL PROBABLY BE TOUGHER THAN MR. ECHEVERRIA WHEN NEGOTIATING TRADE AND OTHER AGREEMENTS WITH THE UNITED STATES, BUT THAT HE IS EAGER TO ELIMINATE RHETORIC AND DEMAGOGUERY FROM THE RELATIONSHIP.

SINCE MR. LOPEZ PORTILLO WILL ALSO INHERIT A SERIOUSLY WEAKENED ECONOMY -- THE MEXICAN PESO WAS EFFECTIVELY DEVALUED LAST WEEK FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 22 YEARS -- HIS AIDES BELIEVE HE IS AWARE THAT SOMETHING OF A POLITICAL RAPPROCHEMENT WITH WASHINGTON IS NECESSARY BEFORE ECONOMIC TIES CAN BE STRENGTHENED.

DURING HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON LATER THIS MONTH, THE FORMER FINANCE MINISTER WILL THEREFORE NOT ONLY MEET WITH ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS AND WITH THE HEADS OF THE WORLD BANK, THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND AND THE INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, BUT WILL ALSO PROBABLY MAKE CONTACT

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WITH AMERICAN BANKERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF LARGE UNITED STATES BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS.

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